



# NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

The NMRA advances the worldwide scale model railroading community through education and standards as well as advocacy and fellowship.

Headquarters office • 4121 Cromwell Road • Chattanooga, TN 37421 • (423) 892-2846 • Fax: (423) 899-4869

Visit the NMRA on the World Wide Web: <http://www.nmra.org>

## NATIONAL OFFICERS

President—Michael C. Brestel (O, HO)  
3208 Vittmer Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45238  
H: (513) 481-0185 W: (513) 661-2141  
e-mail: [pres@hq.nmra.org](mailto:pres@hq.nmra.org)

Vice President—Allen Pollock, HLM (1:20.3)  
PO Box 243  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0243  
H: (573) 636-9946  
e-mail: [vp@hq.nmra.org](mailto:vp@hq.nmra.org)

Secretary—Robert (Bob) V. Gangwish (HO)  
1704 S. Lake Reedy Blvd.  
Frostproof, FL 33843-7652  
H: 863-635-2003  
e-mail: [secy@hq.nmra.org](mailto:secy@hq.nmra.org)

Chief Financial Officer—Kevin Feeney (HO)  
831 New Norwalk Rd.  
New Canaan, CT 06840-6443  
H: (203) 966-5175 Fax: (203) 316-3562  
e-mail: [treas@hq.nmra.org](mailto:treas@hq.nmra.org)

NMRA Canada President—Ron Einarson  
1364 Dudley Crescent  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 1P3  
H: (204) 475-6267  
e-mail: [presca@hq.nmra.org](mailto:presca@hq.nmra.org)

Past President—John Roberts MMR, HLM (O)  
104 Heritage Pointe  
Williamsburg, VA 23188-7894 H: 757-345-3797  
O: 757-345-3118 Fax: 757-345-6944  
e-mail: [pastpres@hq.nmra.org](mailto:pastpres@hq.nmra.org)

General Counsel—Robert J. Amsler, Jr.  
514 Dover Place  
Saint Louis, MO 63111-2338  
314-353-9131 or  
314-754-2688  
[legal@hq.nmra.org](mailto:legal@hq.nmra.org)

rev. 9-1-09

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Ferguson (HO, G)  
530 Fig Tree Ln.  
Martinez, CA 94553  
H: (925) 228-6833 e-mail: [raadir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:raadir@hq.nmra.org)

Tony Koester (HO)  
949 Ridge Rd.  
Newton, NJ 07860  
H: (973) 579-1938 Fax: (973) 579-7474  
e-mail: [alwwdir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:alwwdir@hq.nmra.org)

Charlie Getz, HLM (HO)  
42 Madera Ave.  
San Carlos, CA 94070  
H: (650) 591-8916 e-mail: [alnadir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:alnadir@hq.nmra.org)

Clark Kooning, MMR (Sn3)  
2869 Battleford Road Unit 3014  
Mississauga, Ont. Can L5N 2S65  
C: (416) 899-9041 e-mail: [candir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:candir@hq.nmra.org)

Peter Jensen (HO, G)  
Post Office Box 694  
Cessnock, NSW 2325 Australia  
(61) 2-4990-9855 e-mail: [paadir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:paadir@hq.nmra.org)

Nobby Clarke (HO, N)  
34 Hopmeadow Court  
Northampton, England, NN3 8QG  
+44-01604-415020 e-mail: [atldir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:atldir@hq.nmra.org)

Miles Hale, MMR (On30)  
5608 N. Mercier Drive  
Kansas City, MO 64118  
H: (816) 588-2302 e-mail: [westdir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:westdir@hq.nmra.org)

Dave Thornton (O)  
2027 Jeffrey Dr.  
Troy, MI 48085-3816  
H: (248) 879-6806 e-mail: [centdir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:centdir@hq.nmra.org)

John Roberts MMR, HLM (O)  
104 Heritage Pointe  
Williamsburg, VA 23188-7894 H: 757-345-3797  
O: 757-345-3118 Fax: 757-345-6944  
e-mail: [eastdir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:eastdir@hq.nmra.org)

## Guest column: The Howell Day Scale Model Railroad Museum

by *Charlie Getz*



## President's Car

NMRA President Mike Brestel

As a member of both the NMRA Board of Directors and the Howell Day Scale Model Railroad Museum (HDM) committee, I would like to discuss the purpose, history, and benefits of the HDM to NMRA members. I also hope to correct some misperceptions about the HDM.

Some members may wonder why a scale model railroad museum is necessary or would be considered a benefit of membership. The answer simple — if you enjoy model railroading, it is instructive, helpful and illuminating to know how we got to where we are.

The only way to do that is to preserve the history of our hobby and industry, and to show how that history is intertwined with the hobby of today. As a columnist for the *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette*, I have occasionally written articles about the history of our hobby. I was amazed to discover that approximately 60 percent of the products available 50 years ago are still available today. Some have been updated but many have not. Thus, I have maintained that we currently are enjoying the golden age of model railroading. We have the best of today's products and technology, coupled with the best of yesterday. It is possible to assemble kits identical to those assembled by notable modelers such as John Allen and Whit Towers.

There are far more tie-ins to history in today's modeling than just product availability. As part of our outreach to the general public, we appeal to their nostalgia and fond memories of childhood trains. That is part of our history. We cannot appreciate how good model railroading is today without a comparison to the model railroading of 20, 30 or 50 years ago.

More than a decade ago, through the generous donation by pioneer hobby shop owner and manufacturer Howell Day, a committee was established by the NMRA Board of Trustees to study, implement and create a museum of scale model railroading. I have served on that committee almost since the beginning, along with former NMRA President and Howell Day Fund Trustee Bob Charles. Other committee members include noted editor and publisher Bob Brown of the *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette*, replacing the late Hal Carstens; Lee Riley of Bachmann Industries; Tom Draper, who acts as treasurer for the committee and fund; John Roberts, former NMRA president and a member of the NMRA BOD, who acts as the chair of the committee; and Allen Pollock, NMRA former president and current VP, who acts as industry liaison.

Because of the creation of an endowment by the late Howell Day, as well the generosity of his widow, Ruth, the estate continues to provide some funding for the work of the committee. However, this amount, as generous as it is, is not sufficient to accomplish all of the goals of our committee. As members may have noticed, the committee for some years has offered collectible and commemorative cars for sale. The committee also sells surplus materials that were donated by members or their families and have been deemed unnecessary for the museum's future use.

*(text continues on page 6)*

**Membership:** NMRA membership dues are \$58 (U.S. currency) per year, of which \$19 covers subscription to the official publication, *SCALE RAILS* and *NMRA BULLETIN*<sup>®</sup>. Address all membership applications, renewals, notices of non-receipt (issues that have been lost or delayed in the mail), or other business matters to the headquarters office. Back issues of *SCALE RAILS* are available while supplies last from the Kalmbach Memorial Library at Chattanooga — contact the library regarding availability and pricing.

(continued from page 3)

The Howell Day Museum Committee has set two goals: a long-term and a more attainable short-term goal. The long-term goal is the creation of a permanent museum on scale model railroading. We are currently considering the historic Southern Pacific railyards area in Sacramento, California, for that permanent museum. There is a cinder block blacksmith shop building that is adjacent to the new Museum of Railroad Technology, currently under development by the California Department of Parks, and that building may be available to house the museum. Preliminary discussions with the California State Railroad Museum (CSRM) have been very positive and they support the concept of locating the permanent museum adjacent to their newly expanded operations. This would allow the possibility of selling a common ticket for both attractions, which would certainly be to our advantage. However, this building is currently controlled by a private developer. While we continue to work with the CSRM and the private developer to secure that location if possible, it is unclear whether it will work out for us.

In the short-term, and as announced in both *SCALE RAILS* and the major model railroad media, the NMRA on behalf of the HDM has signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create a gallery exhibit. While the exhibit is not the museum for which we have planned, it will allow us an excellent way to introduce the public to the hobby of scale model railroading and its history. It is that CSRM gallery exhibit, and not the ultimate Howell Day Museum we hope to establish, which I intend to discuss in the rest of this column.

Through member feedback we have learned that here are two major misconceptions about our work as a committee that I want to address. *First, the committee has not used and will not use any dues money to create either the gallery exhibit or the permanent museum.* We consider it our sacred trust to utilize only monies received by donation, sales, or other independent sources to fund our activities. Thus, while we are a function of the NMRA and are bound by policy decisions of the BOD, we certainly do not see ourselves as an NMRA-funded program. We pay our own way and we raise our own funds. In addition, we are in the process of incorporating as a nonprofit corporation affiliated with the NMRA, but

separate and distinct from the larger group. This separate incorporation should further reassure any members that our activities will not be funded by dues money.

*Second, there is not a scale model railroad museum already in existence at NMRA headquarters in Chattanooga.* The headquarters building is not set up for such a museum. The space is inadequate, and the number of visitors is simply insufficient to maintain such an operation. The basement of the NMRA building does provide excellent storage space for our collection, and we appreciate the generosity of the BOD in allowing that use. Please note, however, that this is space that otherwise would be unused, and the committee pays its share of insurance, utilities, and security for this space.

In my opinion, the best way to introduce the public to scale model railroading is to educate them on the history of its development. By seeing familiar artifacts from their childhood or placing those artifacts in the context of an earlier era, the public will learn that scale model railroading goes back almost as far as the prototype. In our proposed gallery exhibit, we hope to introduce our hobby to the more than 600,000 annual visitors to the CSRM, in part by addressing that history. Did you know, for example, that there is a model railroading link to the *Titanic* disaster? Model railroading did not cause the ship to sink, but the entire U.S. shipment of a British model railroad magazine sank with the *Titanic*, and in the subsequent issue of that magazine, the publisher apologized to his U.S. readers for the loss of that issue. As another example, a love of model railroading led to the creation of Disneyland by live-steam modeler Walt Disney. These and many other stories wait to be told.

To tell those stories, we need your help. We need your financial help in raising a significant amount of money to develop the gallery exhibit at the CSRM — an exhibit which promises to be unparalleled in its scope and potential. The CSRM is the third largest tourist attraction in California, drawing an astounding 600,000-plus paid attendees each year. We have been offered free space (i.e., no rent!) of a substantial size, adjacent to the existing and excellent Sefton Toy Train Exhibit, to introduce scale model railroading to the public. In that space, as Bob Brown will

illustrate in a future issue of *SCALE RAILS*, we hope to display outstanding model work, a short tour of the history of our hobby, and a section on the hobby today, including how interested visitors might become involved in scale model railroading. I can think of no better recruitment tool for our hobby — and for the NMRA — than this exhibit in one of the premier railroad museums in the United States.

We have a gallery design that has been approved in concept by both the NMRA BOD and the CSRM. We have an estimated budget which, although daunting, is obtainable. We are seeking artifacts, donations, and economic support to accomplish this fantastic opportunity. Any donation to the NMRA where no services are provided in return may have favorable tax consequences for U.S. members. (For other countries, please check with your tax advisor.) The NMRA is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations to it may be tax deductible. This includes artifacts as well as cash donations. The committee uses your donations in two ways. Certain materials judged to have intrinsic value are retained, either for the gallery exhibit or for the permanent museum we hope to build some years from now. Other donations, which are either duplicative or deemed unnecessary to preserve, fund our efforts through surplus resale in accordance with IRS regulations. In the past, we have utilized the silent auction at the NMRA National Convention as a vehicle to sell this surplus material as a further member benefit. We are always looking at other options to make these materials more widely available to NMRA members.

I hope that these paragraphs have served both to acquaint you with the Howell Day Museum and to answer any questions you may have about our plans and operations. As always, we are available to answer any and all questions you may have — and to accept your donation to the HDM!

*Charlie Getz, guest columnist*